

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

April 2025



Narrandera
Shire Council

**This Disability
Inclusion Action
Plan, created in
collaboration with
our community,
builds on past plans
and achievements
to outline a four-
year roadmap toward
a more inclusive,
accessible, and
connected shire.**

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Narrandera Shire Council acknowledges and the Wiradjuri people as the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future and we extend our respect to all Indigenous Australians in Narrandera Shire.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and rivers. We also recognise the resilience, strength, and pride of the Wiradjuri community.

Welcome	03
Introduction	04
Legislative and policy context	05
What is a Disability Inclusion Action Plan?	06
What must a Disability Inclusion Action Plan include?	07
Integrated planning and reporting	08
Defining disability	10
<i>Types of disability</i>	11
<i>Barriers experienced by people with disability</i>	12
<i>The case for inclusion</i>	12
Context	14
Our community	14
Disability in Australia	16
Disability in Narrandera Shire	17
Developing this Disability Inclusion Action Plan	18
Community engagement	18
What we heard	19
<i>Attitudes and behaviours</i>	19
<i>Liveable communities</i>	20
<i>Access to meaningful employment</i>	21
<i>Improving access to services</i>	22
Our Action Plan	23
Outcome 1: Attitudes and behaviours	24
Outcome 2: Liveable communities	25
Outcome 3: Employment outcomes	26
Outcome 4: Systems and processes	27



Narrandera CBD with
its wide streets and
footpaths

Welcome

On behalf of Narrandera Shire Council, I am proud to present our Disability Inclusion Action Plan for the four-year period from 2025 to 2029.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed in partnership with our community and builds on our previous plans and achievements to create a four-year roadmap for a more inclusive, accessible and connected Narrandera Shire.

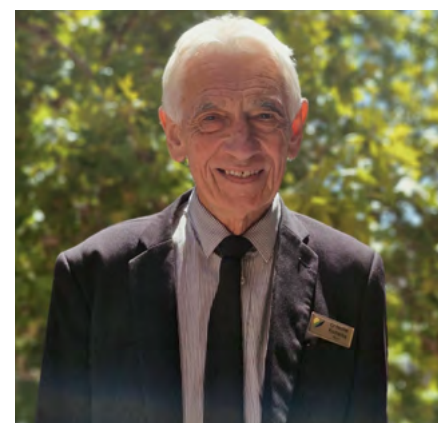
Approximately one in five Australians has some form of disability, and that percentage is growing. The Narrandera Shire is a great place to live, work and visit, but there are still a range of accessibility and inclusion challenges facing people with disability and the community-at-large. Narrandera Shire Council is committed to achieving our shared goal of improving access and inclusion and breaking down the barriers that affect people with disability and their ability to participate in everyday life.

Much has been achieved in recent years to make the Narrandera Shire more inclusive and accessibility, but there remains much more work to be done. This Disability Inclusion Plan sets out how we will build on these outcomes to successfully:

- Promote **positive attitudes and behaviours** towards people with disability,
- Create a more **liveable community**,
- Improve access to **meaningful employment outcomes** for people with disability, and
- Enhance **systems and processes** to make it easier for people with disability to access the services and supports they need in the community.

We want to thank all members of the community who contributed to the development of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan, and in particular, those with lived experience, including people with disability and their families and carers. We also want to thank the various local disability services providers and community organisations who do so much to support and empower people with disability every day, and who have also supported us in preparing this plan.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan translates our vision into meaningful actions and serves as our roadmap for the next four years, providing a level of action and accountability moving forward. It is our hope that Council's leadership in championing a more inclusive and accessible community will be an example for other agencies, organisations, groups and businesses to follow. We look forward to what we can achieve together over the next four years.



Councillor Neville Kschenka
Mayor, Narrandera Shire Council

Introduction

The purpose of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to identify actions that deliver on the diverse needs of people with disability in the Narrandera Shire community.

This Plan identifies the actions required to positively address the physical and systemic barriers faced by people with disability in our community. Through the implementation of this Plan, we will ensure that people with disability experience greater independence, dignity, and equitable opportunities for social and economic inclusion.

This Plan has been developed in accordance with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and aligns with the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan. It is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPWD).

Legislative and policy context

There is a range of Commonwealth and State legislation that promotes access and inclusion for people with disabilities. The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* requires Council to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan to remove

barriers and enable people with disabilities to participate equally in their communities. The following diagram shows the key Commonwealth and State legislation that informs local government disability access and inclusion planning.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

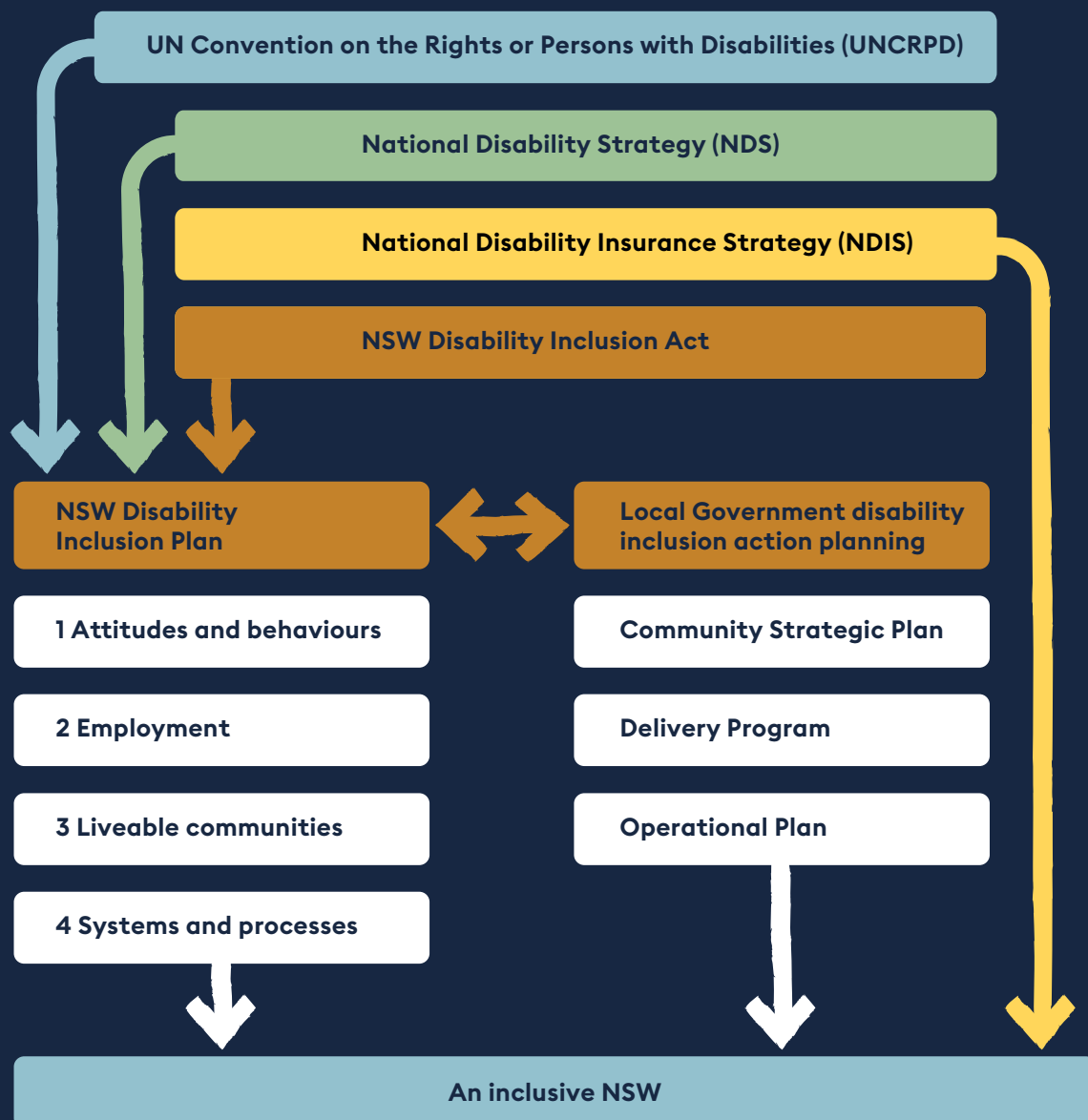


Figure 1 International, national and state policy affecting Disability Inclusion Action Planning

What is a Disability Inclusion Action Plan?

Disability Inclusion Planning is one way that governments, public authorities and all organisations can reduce and remove barriers for people with disability and foster a more accessible and inclusive community.

Disability Inclusion Planning is about making a plan that outlines the intention and actions that public authorities will take to remove barriers in access to their information, services, facilities, and employment as well as to foster the promotion of the rights of people with disability.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* requires all public authorities – including Narrandera Shire Council as a local government organisation – to develop and adopt a DIAP spanning a four-year period, setting out the measures they will put in place to support people with disability to better access support and services available in the community, and participate fully in community life.

The purpose of this DIAP is to support disability inclusion in the Narrandera Shire community. While the DIAP focuses on supporting people with disability, our actions support our wider goal for inclusion. Making it easier for people to get around and access information is beneficial to all members of our community.

What must a Disability Inclusion Action Plan include?

Under Section 12(3) of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, this DIAP must:

- **Specify how Council regards disability principles**
- **Include strategies to support people with disability, including strategies about the following:**
 - Providing access to buildings, events and facilities,
 - Providing access to information,
 - Accommodating the specific needs of people with disability,
 - Supporting employment of people with disability, and
 - Encouraging and creating opportunities for people with disability to access the full range of services and activities available in the community
- **Include details of Council's consultation about the DIAP with people with disability**
- **Explain how the DIAP supports the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.**



Integrated planning and reporting

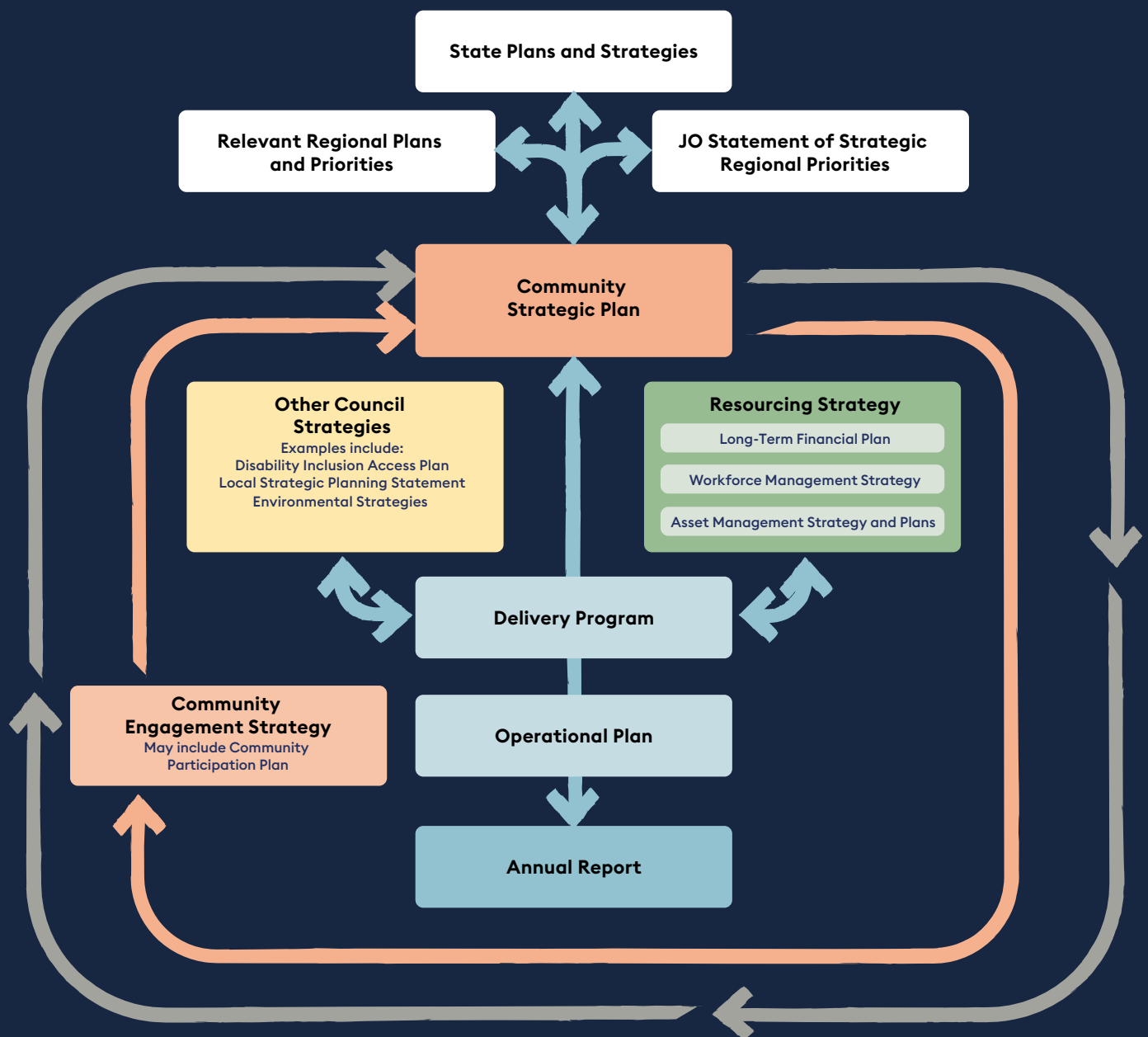
This Disability Inclusion Action Plan forms part of Narrandera Shire Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, which brings together a suite of integrated strategic plans that set our vision for Narrandera Shire and the goals, strategies and actions to achieve that vision.

The development of this DIAP has occurred using the principles identified in the *Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Guidelines for Local Government in NSW* and accompanying IP&R Handbook for Local Government in NSW published and prescribed by the Office of Local Government, and the priorities identified in the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. This DIAP seeks to integrate with other strategies, including our Community Strategic Plan, to ensure the principles of inclusion and access are embedded in our all planning frameworks.

Individual actions contained in this DIAP will be resourced for delivery in our annual Operational Plans over the coming four-year period. Reporting is a key element of the IP&R framework, and we report on our progress in implementing our Operational Plans via Annual Reports, which are prepared within five months of the end of each financial year.

We also submit our DIAP to the NSW Disability Council and, as required under section 13 of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, report to the Minister for Disability Services on our progress in achieving our DIAP on an annual basis. The Minister for Disability Services then tables a report in Parliament about the implementation of all DIAPs by public authorities, including local councils.

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework



Defining disability

Disability is part of the human experience. Most of us will experience physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and/or cognitive disability at some stage in our lives – either personally, or in caring for a loved one.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* defines disability as:

‘The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which an interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’

The World Health Organisation (WHO) shifts the understanding of disability from a focus on impairment of individuals, to improving barriers to access. WHO identifies an individual's environment as having a significant effect on their experience and extent of disability. Inaccessible environments create barriers that often hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others.

Types of disability

There are many types of disabilities, and they can affect people in different ways every day. Disability can be visible or invisible, permanent or temporary. For the purpose of this DIAP, we will define disability to include, but not be limited to, the following types of disability:



Physical

Affects a person's ability to perform physical activities, such as mobility or dexterity. Examples include quadriplegia, amputee and cerebral palsy.



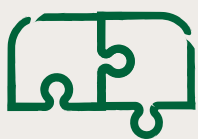
Intellectual

Affects a person's ability to learn and perform certain daily life skills and tasks. Examples include down syndrome, tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC) and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD).



Sensory

Affects a person's ability to hear and/or see. Examples include hearing impairment and vision impairment.



Development and learning

Affects a person's physical, emotional, social, communication and thinking skills. Examples include autism and dyslexia.



Neurological

Affects a person's nervous system that impacts their mental or bodily functions. Examples include acquired brain injury, epilepsy, dementia and multiple sclerosis.



Mental illness

Affects a person's thinking processes. Examples include anxiety, depress and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Barriers experienced by people with disability

People with disability experience many types of barriers, including attitudinal, physical, social and technological barriers. These barriers can limit their access to services, employment, and community participation.

Barriers can be:

- **Attitudinal** – making assumptions about what activities or jobs people with disability can or cannot participate in.
- **Physical** – buildings, pathways, parks and open spaces that have not been designed or built to be accessible.
- **Social** – information not provided in an accessible format and communication systems that exclude some people from services, programs, events or activities.
- **Technological** – limited access to assistive technology and digital content.

The case for inclusion

Inclusion reduces disadvantage, isolation, and discrimination. It is the foundation of a connected and cohesive society.

Inclusion has far-reaching positive impacts across all aspects of life, including health, wellbeing, education and employment. These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with families and the broader community all being enriched by an inclusive society. As a community, we are more resilient when we are inclusive.

The case for an inclusive society and community is strong:

- As a community, we are poorer without a diverse range of viewpoints and individual perspectives.
- Exclusion leads to disadvantage and discrimination, which have far-reaching negative impacts across all aspects of life, including health, welfare, education and employment. These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with family units and the broader community all being negatively impacted by a non-inclusive society.
- There is a strong economic imperative for increasing the inclusiveness of our society. Analysis indicates that providing people with disability real job opportunities and the chance to move off social service dependence can have a large economic impact.



The Narrandera Skywalk provides access for people of all abilities

Context

Our community

Situated on the Murrumbidgee River at the heart of the Riverina region of south-west New South Wales, the Narrandera Shire local government area is strategically located between Sydney and Melbourne and offers the best of country living.

Located at the intersection of the Newell and Sturt Highways, Narrandera Shire is well connected to the Riverina's major regional centres of Albury, Griffith, and Wagga Wagga. The Narrandera-Leeton Airport, located on the outskirts of Narrandera, is serviced by Regional Express Airlines with regular return flights to Sydney.

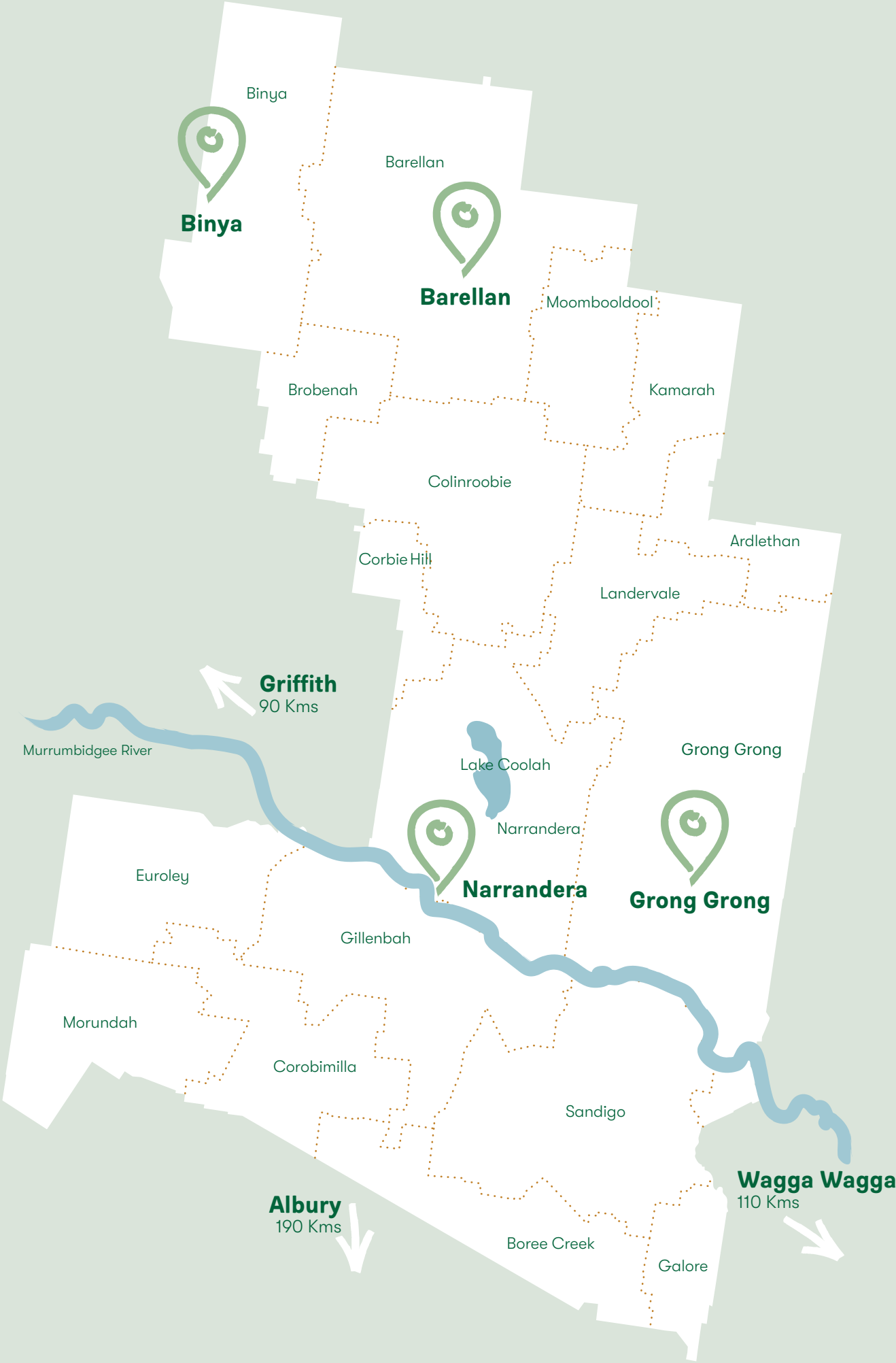
Home to a permanent resident population of approximately 5,700 people, Narrandera Shire covers an area of around 4,118 square kilometres and offers a unique combination of rural, agricultural and natural landscapes. Narrandera Shire includes the township of Narrandera and rural villages of Barellan, Binya and Grong Grong, as well as 15 other rural localities.

Narrandera Shire has a strong Indigenous heritage, with the Wiradjuri people having lived in the region for thousands of years. Today, around 12.7 per cent of residents identify as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, significantly higher than the New South Wales average of 3.4 per cent.

Narrandera, which serves as the administrative centre and the key commercial and services hub of the Shire, is a key regional hub with a rich historical heritage. European settlement dates from the 1830s, with land along

the Murrumbidgee River used mainly for farming. The village of Narrandera was established in the 1860s with significant growth seen in the 1880s due to the arrival of the railway and timber milling. Narrandera and areas along the Murrumbidgee River again saw significant growth when the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was developed allowing land to be used for more intensive farming such as rice and citrus fruits.

The Murrumbidgee River affords Narrandera Shire a unique combination of agricultural, rural, and natural landscapes. The area is renowned for its cultural significance, including several heritage-listed buildings that reflect its development over time. Agriculture has always been a cornerstone of the Shire's economy, with fertile soils along the Murrumbidgee River supporting the production of a range of crops, including cotton, rice, cereals, and various horticultural products. Livestock farming, particularly sheep and cattle, also plays an important role in the local economy. In recent years, Narrandera Shire has supported a growing visitor economy, with visitors drawn to the natural beauty of the area, our historical and cultural attractions, and our rich Wiradjuri heritage.



Disability in Australia

As at the time of the 2021 Census, one in five Australians had a disability. The below statistics, produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Australian Disability Network, provide a snapshot of disability in Australia.

1 in 3

of people with disability has a severe or profound disability

1 in 10

people with disability has experienced **disability discrimination** in the past year

77%

identify as having a physical disability

23%

identify as having a mental or behavioural disability

50%

of all older Australians aged 65 years and over have a disability

Twice as likely

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are nearly **twice as likely** as non-Indigenous Australians to be living with disability

1 in 6

Australians are affected by hearing loss

4.4%

Only 4.4% of people with disability in Australia use a wheelchair

Underemployed

People with disability are more likely to be **underemployed**

Disability in Narrandera Shire

People with disability are diverse, and disability can be very different from person to person. Disability affects many people, directly and indirectly, in large and small ways.

As at the time of 2021 Census, 438 people (representing 7.7 per cent of the population) in Narrandera Shire reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. The total number of people with disability increased by 31 people in the five-year period between the 2016 Census and 2021 Census.

601 residents (representing 13.2 per cent of the population) reported having provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition of due to old age, during the two weeks prior to Census Night. This is higher than both the state average (11.5 per cent) and national average (11.9 per cent).



Developing this Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Community engagement

How you participated

Between October and December 2024, Council delivered a comprehensive consultation with our community, titled *Stronger Together*. The results and findings of this consultation process informed the development of our new Community Strategic Plan, as well as this Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Over 250 people from Narrandera Shire participated in this process. As part of our consultation program, we held targeted engagement focusing on disability inclusion and access planning, which 36 people participated in. Respondents included people with disability, their carers and families, and disability services providers.

What we asked

Through the *Stronger Together* consultation, we asked our community to help shape the priorities of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan by identifying strengths, challenges and priorities for each of the four outcome areas:

- Attitudes and behaviours
- Liveable communities
- Access to meaningful employment
- Improving access to services



What we heard



Attitudes and behaviours

We heard that the Narrandera Shire has a strong community spirit and inclusive approach, with mostly positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has played a crucial role in increasing access to services, enhancing quality of life for people with disability, and improving community understanding of accessibility needs.

At the same time, there is an opportunity to break down barriers and strengthen inclusion. Community groups, businesses and employers are willing to be inclusive, but there is a perception that they often lack the knowledge and understanding to fully accommodate people with disability. Resources and tools to support community groups and businesses improve accessibility are required.

You told us you would like Council to:

- Embed disability inclusion planning in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) to ensure accessibility is considered in all Council services and initiatives.
- Support local businesses, schools, community groups and sporting and service clubs to improve disability awareness and take up inclusive practices.
- Share knowledge and promote resources to assist community groups, businesses and employers better accommodate people with disability.
- Establish an Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee to support and inform Council's decision-making and encourage people with disability to join other Council committees and working groups.
- Ensure Council publications, documents and communications positively reflect people with disability and are produced in an accessible format.



"People are generally supportive of those with disabilities, but more education is needed so businesses and organisations know how to be more inclusive."



"Businesses want to be inclusive but don't know where to start."

"People are welcoming, but there's still a lack of real understanding about what inclusion means."

What we heard

continued



Liveable communities

We heard that liveability is a major issue for people with disability across the Narrandera Shire. Access to footpaths and crossings, community facilities, public toilets and amenities, as well as shops and businesses, is concerning and improvements need to be realised. We also heard that local events and celebrations, which play an important role in bringing our community together, could be more accessible and inclusive.

You told us you would like Council to:

- Ensure local events are inclusive and accessible.
- Upgrade laneways, footpaths and ramps to improve accessibility in town centres and urban areas.
- Ensure street lighting is adequate, especially in dark and high-risk areas.
- Work with local businesses to promote the benefits of improving access to shops and stores.
- Improve accessibility to public toilets and amenities, by way of maintaining the currency of information published to the National Public Toilet Map and implementing the Master Locksmith Access Key system.



“We have beautiful parks and natural spaces, but they’re not accessible to everyone. We need better paths, ramps, and disability-friendly picnic areas.”



“There are no adult change rooms in public toilets across the Shire, and some close too early.”

“Footpaths and pedestrian crossings are lacking, making it hard to walk around safely, especially for older residents and people with disabilities.”

What we heard

continued



Access to meaningful employment

People with disability have diverse skills, knowledge and experience that local businesses and employers can benefit from. However, we heard that local employment opportunities for people with disability remain extremely limited. While some local businesses lead the way in employing people with disability, many other employers are hesitant due to a lack of understanding of available supports. We heard that people with disability are eager to work and appreciate the opportunity to do so, and further training and skill development programs would be beneficial in helping them transition into meaningful employment.

You told us you would like Council to:

- Prioritise inclusion in Council's Strategic Workforce Management Plan and develop programs and policies to increase recruitment and retention of employees with disability.
- Ensure Council workplaces are accessible for all staff and identify and implement workplace modifications, where required, to support employees with disability.
- Promote programs to increase job opportunities, workplace inclusivity and employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Promote training and skills development programs for people with disability.



"We need more training and skill development programs to help people with disability transition into jobs."

"I want to work, but finding an employer who understands disability support and job modifications is really difficult."



"Employers need better awareness of workplace modifications and funding options for hiring people with disability."

What we heard

continued



Improving access to services

Accessible systems and processes and up-to-date information are critical to enabling people with disability to stay connected, communicate and interact with both Council as well as other government agencies and service providers. Of particular concern is local access to health, medical and social services, which is limited.

You told us that you would like Council to:

- Ensure Council buildings and public spaces meet accessibility standards.
- Ensure Council's website and digital services are fully accessible, including screen-reader compatibility and Easy Read formats.
- Advocate for increased GP and allied health services, including speech pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, to reduce long wait times and improve access.
- Promote improved collaboration between disability service providers, aged care services, and healthcare providers to ensure seamless support.
- Maintain Centrelink services at the Narrandera Shire Library and promote the availability of these services.



"Mental health services are lacking – we need more support for people with disability."

"The NDIS has been a game changer for some, but there are still gaps in awareness and understanding of how to access services."



"Better coordination between disability service providers is needed to reduce delays in support."

Our Action Plan

Outcome 1: Attitudes and behaviours



Strategy

1. Promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability.

Action	Responsible service unit	Year 1 2025-26	Year 2 2026-27	Year 3 2027-28	Year 4 2028-29	Success measure/ target
1.1. Ascertain community interest in establishing an Access and Advisory Committee.	Community Development	✓				Committee Expression of Interest (EOI)/ facilitated
1.2. Assess feasibility of delivering the 'Zero Barriers' initiative in the Narrandera Shire.	Economic Development		✓			Feasibility assessment/ completed
1.3. Promote an Access and Inclusion Checklist for businesses, service clubs and community groups.	Community Development		✓			Checklist/promoted
1.4. Incorporate disability inclusion training into Council's induction and ongoing training program.	Human Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	Disability inclusion training/delivered

Our Action Plan

Outcome 2: Liveable communities



Strategy

2. Improve access to buildings, spaces, places and activities for people with disability.

Action	Responsible service unit	Year 1 2025–26	Year 2 2026–27	Year 3 2027–28	Year 4 2028–29	Success measure/ target
2.1. Review pedestrian crossing points on high-traffic streets and laneways.	Works Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	Crossing points/ reviewed
2.2. Ensure accessible signage at Council buildings and facilities.	Open Space and Recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	Signage accessibility/ maintained
2.3. Investigate funding opportunities to enhance Council playgrounds to include accessible equipment.	Open Space and Recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	Funding opportunities/ investigated
2.4. Investigate feasibility of implementing the Master Locksmith Access Key system.	Projects and Assets			✓		Feasibility assessment/ completed
2.5. Investigate funding opportunities to install an adult change room in Narrandera.	Projects and Assets	✓	✓	✓	✓	Funding opportunities/ investigated
2.6. Include a list of accessible attractions on the <i>Visit Narrandera</i> website.	Economic Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	Attraction accessibility/ promoted

Our Action Plan

Outcome 3: Employment outcomes



Strategy

3. Improve access to meaningful employment for people with disability.

Action	Responsible service unit	Year 1 2025-26	Year 2 2026-27	Year 3 2027-28	Year 4 2028-29	Success measure/ target
3.1. Collect workforce diversity data and ask how employees with disability want and need to be supported by the organisation.	Human Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	Workforce diversity survey/ administered
3.2. Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for persons with a disability to engage more fully with the community.	Human Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	Volunteer Program inclusive of people with disability/ maintained
3.3. Review and update Council's recruitment process to incorporate application questions addressing attitude towards diversity and inclusion.	Human Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	Employment application process/update and maintained
3.4. Promote training and skills development programs for people with disability.	Community Support	✓	✓	✓	✓	Skills development programs/ promoted

Our Action Plan

Outcome 4: Systems and processes



Strategy

4. Improve access to services, systems and processes for people with disability.

Action	Responsible service unit	Year 1 2025-26	Year 2 2026-27	Year 3 2027-28	Year 4 2028-29	Success measure/ target
4.1. Develop and implement a Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant website.	Information Technology	✓				Website implementation/ completed
4.2. Investigate feasibility of installing hearing loops in all Council customer service areas.	Information Technology		✓			Feasibility assessment/ completed
4.3. Maintain Council's Home Library Service.	Community Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	Home Library Service/maintained
4.4. Review Council's Brand and Style Guidelines to ensure reports, plans and publications are visually accessible.	Executive Services	✓				Brand and Style Guidelines/ reviewed
4.5. Maintain Centrelink services at the Narrandera Library and promote availability of these services.	Community Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	Centrelink services/ maintained and promoted



141 East Street
Narrandera NSW 2700
T 02 6959 5510
council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
narrandera.nsw.gov.au



